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SUBJECT: STATUS OF FRONTIER CORPS

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¶1. (SBU) On December 29, 2006, PolCouns raised with the MFA's America's Desk post's request for information regarding the legal status of the Frontier Corps. (Reftel) Post had twice earlier requested the MFA's assistance in parsing the legal underpinnings of the Frontier Corps, as the issue had been raised in the course of the joint Embassy/CENTCOM COIN Assessment. PolCouns noted that embassy officers had been advised that the Government of Pakistan considers the Frontier Corps a civil armed force, but that the Embassy was now requesting the MFA's assistance identifying the specific laws, regulations, statutes or other legal orders that govern the Frontier Corps and that delineate the legal process through which command of the Frontier Corps or its constituent units may be transferred from the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Defense. MFA Director Mansoor Khan explained the Frontier Corps's status to PolCouns, but acknowledged that his talking points did not fully respond to the Embassy's questions. Khan indicated that he would seek a more detailed response before the reftel deadline.

¶2. (SBU) On January 9, 2007, PolCouns contacted the MFA Americas desk to ask whether the MFA had been able to identify the relevant legal authorities governing the Frontier Corps status. MFA Director Khan said that the MFA had sought additional information from the relevant ministries, but had not yet received responses. The MFA requested that the Embassy submit its request for additional information in writing, as this could prompt a quicker response from other government agencies. Post has prepared and delivered a diplomatic note to the MFA requesting specific information on the laws establishing and regulating the Frontier Corps on January 9.

¶3. (SBU) In late December 2006, the Office of the Defense Representative - Pakistan (ODRP) received the following paper from the Director General of Military Operations describing the status of the Frontier Corps. This is the paper which informed the MFA's presentation to PolCouns on December 29:

(Begin text.)

Frontier Corps (FC) NWFP is part of Civil Armed Forces of Pakistan. It falls under the legal jurisdiction of Ministry of Interior. Civil Armed Forces are structured to perform dual tasks of internal security and augmenting the defensive effort of the Country against an external threat.

During peace time FC NWFP has been usually tasked to perform border control duties, arrest/elimination of terrorists, anti-smuggling and anti-during (sic) trafficking duties and

reinforcement of police force whenever required. In case of Army's deployment inside the Country, FC NWFP is invariably always placed under the command of the Ministry of Defense.

In case of external aggression, FC NWFP transits to be under command Ministry of Defense, as and when so ordered. In this case operational control is exercised by Ministry of Defense.

Experience of past couple of decades indicates that FC NWFP has been always operationally controlled by Ministry of Defense. Its massive deployment to support Army's effort in GWOT as well as anti-drug trafficking is a case in point.

Presently, FC NWFP has been deployed in FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas) and some other parts of NWFP and operating under the orders of the Ministry of Defense.

(End text.)

14. (SBU) Post will follow up with the MFA and other ministries on the legal status of the Frontier Corps.
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